

Mr. Tony D'Wonderful

Looking for a Flesh Fix

Tony D'Wonderful met Lotta Gue when she was working the streets. He lived in the neighborhood, and fell in love with her. Snookie Lumps wasn't around to give her that comfort she needed.

Tony was a lonely fuck, with a lot of heart and sincerity. His rooming house was in the middle of the Zone, 231 Appleton Street. He lived on the third floor. He had no sink, and roof outside his only window where he sat out to view the action below. He saw the cars driving around, and the women working the streets.

He was twenty-eight, and still had not experienced any sexual contact of any kind. After he was twenty-one, he wasn't going to waste it on just anyone. Maybe Fate was telling him that one of these girls would be an unlikely but likely first sexual experience.

He started to sit on his front steps and hang out with the girls working the street. He would let them use the bathroom in the hallway to pee, but they were really shooting up coke, or heroin in Lotta's case. But Lotta was doing coke and heroin-the coke reminded her of Snookie Lumps, who she would write to at least four times a week.

Lotta gave Tony that look, that look that said, "You're a part of this fucking human race." Or, "Maybe I can get some mileage out of him." Tony felt as if he was a friend of Lotta's. They had never gone out on a "date" or even spent any time together. Tony saw the hungry feeling that Lotta had inside. Maybe that hungry feeling was for him.

Tony saw the goodness, sincerity, and genuineness in

Lotta Gue. He was looking into her Human Factor. Tony had this ability, it seemed, to take away a person's human sufferings and take them onto himself. He ended up doing this with Lotta. She had too much pain even for Tony to endure, but her suffering was somewhat relieved.

It was a Sunday night. Tony was out on the front steps again. He hadn't seen Lotta in over a week. One thing about street walkers, every time you saw them, you never knew if you would see them again. This made Tony cram a lifetime into a moment whenever he saw Lotta.

Lotta came around. Tony was in heaven, but couldn't show it. She would go to the corner, a car would stop, and she would get in. Tony would see it, and wait for her to come back around. She went in and used the bathroom a lot that night. She was thinking about Snookie and the pain the life had inflicted on her. Lotta saw Tony as a good guy, a guy who didn't take drugs and who didn't appear to go out with the girls. Couldn't hurt to have another friend'

It was two o'clock in the morning. Lotta Gue came by one more time. Tony was rambling a mile a minute, trying to keep Lotta's attention. Lotta said, "I hate to cut you short, but I gotta crash." Tony said, "You can crash at my place." Lotta said, "I have a place in Lawrence to crash. It's better to crash there, because I have errands to do there in the morning." Tony had an empty feeling inside. Would he ever get a chance to spend time with Lotta? Was she the woman who would relieve him of his virginity once and for all?

Tony had that ugly feeling in his gut, that feeling that he got when he took on other people's woes, making him feel even more empty than before. Lotta saw this, and felt bad for Tony and said to him, "I'll be around

next week-maybe we can go out and do something."
A care came up, and Lotta got in. Tony went back
to his room.

A week later Tony found out that Lotta was in jail.
He had to be friendly with some of the rather unsavory
street walkers. He finally got her full name and where
to write her in Framingham.

It felt that Tony had already taken on the majority of
Lotta's suffering. He wrote her a letter telling her of the
goodness and genuineness that he saw in her. He
never knew if he would get a reply. But he did after a
week. It was the most wonderful letter with the most
graceful handwriting. They would write each other and
tell about their lives, their hopes and dreams, the agony
that life had issued them. But Tony would never have
sex with Lotta. They wrote back and forth for a year.

Here are some of the poems Lotta wrote to Tony
during her time in jail:

Thoughts of You

Thinking of the friend you were?
And how you become, so much more
The letters, the poems, the smiles you sent?
Somehow to my heart they all went
And when I'm sad and feeling low?
I think of you, and my heart will glow.
Burning like a candle bright?
With you I feel I've won the fight
I found it all.. when I found you,
You make me feel like someone new

My Depression

Slipping away, away from me?
Someplace in my memory
To a place that's oh so sad..
Everything there's oh so bad

I'm somewhere else inside my mind?
I've left the world far behind
All alone, scared to death?
I start to take deep deep breaths
I try to run, I try to hide?
from the nightmare I live inside
I call out, but no one hears?
sometimes I think no one cares
I reach for you, please grasp my hand?
Take me from never, never land.
Bring me back where I want to be?
to you and I in reality.

My Body

My body is listening,
My soul searching for the
Presence of you, like antennas
Reaching out grasping for you,
To take in your essence, your emotions
your thoughts
You are speaking, my body is listening

Testing My Heart

It's easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows on like a song
But the one worthwhile, is the one who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong?
For the test of the heart is trouble
And it always comes with years
And the smile that is worth the praise of the earth
Is the smile that comes through tears.

The Essence of Me

We've enjoyed our love so long
Our souls have come so close
That I keep the essence of you
As you keep mine.
If you deny my presence in your life,
It would be enough to embrace you and talk

I give you so much life, that now you
must possess
The essence of me.
I make no attempt to be your master
I'm nothing, there's no vanity in me
I give you only what's good in me
I'm so poor, what else can I give'

Dreams of Sand

Here in my room, all by myself?
Wishing I were somewhere else?
Thoughts are drifting like clouds afloat?
to a deep blue ocean on a dreamy boat
Seeing faces come and go, of people
and places
I just don't know?
Listening for laughter that isn't there?
Make believe visions that disappear?
I open my eyes, I'm forced to land,
and I'm all alone
With my dreams of sand

Suspended

Suspended in time and space
My love it seems goes to waste
My smiles, my tears, my joy, my pain,
all let out, but all in vain
I call to you, you do not hear, my state
of mine you cannot share
I'm all alone with what I feel, in this
tiny room, it's a big deal
My emotions are here, alive and real,
the strength from within will
help me deal

Do You?

Do you lie awake and think of me,
as I think of you?
Do you ever really wonder exactly what I do?

Do you call my name and reach for me
deep in the night?
Do you long to hold me close and
make it feel so right?
Do you weep silent tears, as I do for you?
Do you think of me as often as I think of you'

Lotta caused trouble in jail and got her
sentence extended.

Tony had purchased a car to drive to
Framingham to visit Lotta. Tony was occasionally
sending her money, even clothing.

One day Lotta was finally to get out of the
big house. Tony went to pick her up. He was
told she got out the day before. He had no way
of finding her. Tony drove all the way home empty
and alone. He felt rejected. He felt used. He raged
inside like he had never raged before. He was about
to explode by the time he got home. He had told his
friends and family about Lotta, and now he looked
like a fool. It would be years before he would be
able to live this down.

Tony survived and would eventually lose his
virginity a few years later with a person who really
wanted to be with him.

Tony wears his heart on his sleeve. Tony is
an easy touch. Tony is centered in his emotions.
He's up, he's down, he's over there, sometimes
he doesn't know where he is. Don't get him when
he's feeling sad, he'll talk your ear off.

He wanted to be a lounge singer, but that era was over,
for him anyway. He was no Robert Goulet or Wayne
Newton. He was just Tony D'Wonderful.

Lotta Gue would go on to transform herself into a Mussolini-style feminist unrecognizable even to Tony.

Nick D

On the Edge, But Never Quite Over It

This adventure could not have happened without the collaboration of Nick D, one of Lance Gargoyle's closest and most trusted friends in music and in life.

At one time in Nick's life his appearance resembled Alec Baldwin in Miami Blues. Nick never had the evil attitude of Junior (the part Baldwin played), but he sure had that survival attitude at one time in his life. He went there, he came back, he went there again, and he finally, hopefully, came back for good.

Lance Gargoyle met Nick D in 1983. Dan the Man Santana, a jamming buddy of Lance's, told Nick when he came back into town, "You gotta meet this guy Lance Gargoyle." Nick D played guitar very well. He enjoyed jazz and played jazz very well, and was very polished.

At that time Lance lived at 231 Appleton Street on the third floor, across the hall from his best buddy, Dave Rawlings. Lance lived in apartment #10, and it had a roof outside its only window. It was a single room, with slanted ceilings because of the roof. Lance would sit out on the roof in the summer time because it was cool. When Dan came over with Nick and introduced him to Lance, Lance knew right away that he would become a valuable ally. Not only did he enjoy jazz as Lance did, but he enjoyed Lance's music. Nick started stopping over regularly, and he and Lance became good friends.

Nick met some other musicians that Lance knew, including Dave Id, and later got interested in industrial

type music. Nick liked to hang around the neighborhood a lot at night. It turned out that he would sometimes be picking up hookers.

He had just come back from living in California for the past eight years. He was a wild man, like Lance. The hairiest arms and hairiest chest you've ever seen. Nick was always smiling and in a good mood, always goofing on life. He had a Dodge Dart, slant six. Eventually he started to work at the hospital where Lance worked, in the supply room. Eventually he would leave and work as a delivery person.

Lance and Nick had a number of adventures. One was when some hookers had stolen some of Lance's musical equipment. Lance had let his guard down and for a moment trusted the nobility of the human race. He knew where one of the hookers hung out in Salem, New Hampshire. Nick D and Lance drove up there. They parked outside the house, and Nick D said he'd get out and check it out. Lance saw him walk up to the door, and then go inside. After a few moments, Lance got out of the car, and went inside too. Lance asked Nick, "What's up?" Nick said, "Nobody's home -- I'm looking for your guitar." Nick and Lance were searching the house of some guy they didn't know while he wasn't home. They quickly looked around, then left. Lance would never forget the daring that Nick D showed that day -- he was a true friend.

Lance would go down to where Nick D was living on Lawrence Street. Nick would record Lance doing his "monster songs," which were his vocal tunes. Nick was not only an excellent guitarist, but also extraordinarily capable in recording.

Nick had had his Class One tractor trailer license since he was eighteen. He started to drive for Poopoo Propane. He made good money. He had used heroin sparingly

in the past, while he was in California. He did it occasionally when he came back to Lowell. Now he was doing it more regularly -- too regularly. He was making terrific money, making long hauls, but he got laid off, and he started using more and more. His unemployment ran out. He moved into 231 Appleton Street. Lance lived downstairs, and was the manager of the building.

Nick lived there for a couple of months, and eventually had to leave. He knew he was bringing too much heat down on the building. Nick wasn't the type of junkie that would hang around with other junkies. Only just to find the new locations where he could cop. A lot of times Nick was speed-balling -- coke and heroin. Nick was bringing heat on the building, and this was putting a strain on his friendship with Lance. He ended up moving out and going into detox.

After that Nick's life went down the drain a little bit more. Nick D had always talked about decadence, and now he was living it. Living in abandoned buildings, taking copper wire from abandoned buildings, like the Gilmore Building on Middlesex Street. He'd cash it in at the junkyards on Tanner Street. But his big thing was -- shoplifting. CDs, anything small. He was in another world now, a world of junkies, decadence, and more decadence. He was a little bit ashamed of what he had become, and didn't want to face his friends.

For a while he lived with Emil Beaulieu, of Emil's Eccentric Records, but that didn't work out. Emil also performed industrial music, and he jammed with Nick D, sometimes in clubs as "Due Process." They made recordings when they lived together, but that's another story, that happened before where we are now.

So now Nick is wallowing in decadence. He had that hungry, on-the-edge look. His face was pitted with sores. He exited from society.

After several years of this, Lance bumped into Nick again. Nick was always evasive, like a shadow. Lance could never track him down. But now he had found him, and they hooked up. Lance had a lot to tell his best buddy Nick D. Lance had moved, and was now creating music on a Korg o1w fd keyboard =musical workstation. Lance had started to create the music of his dreams -- abstract, experimental music, multilayered, multitextural, multitracked compositions. Lance loved his music. The year was 1993.

Nick stopped up to see Lance and hear some of his music. Nick got on welfare and moved into Lance's new building. Nick had been diagnosed with the AIDS virus. He got on welfare, and then he applied for social security. The welfare money helped him get into the building that Lance lived in, across the hall from Lance.

Lance had started doing coke once in a while, before he and Nick hooked up again. Eventually Lance convinced Nick to cop for him. Lance would do ten or twenty dollars worth at a time, never wanted to go out more, which is the norm. Nick would sometimes be content with a twenty, but sometimes would want more, and want to get some heroin too, to go with it. Lance never wanted to meet these people who sold the drugs, and he never did. Lance would drop Nick off in the neighborhood, and meet Nick around the corner. Sometimes they'd have to go to four place before they found something.

The thing with coke is, first you're counting how many days you did it, and then you're counting how many days you didn't. A little was never enough for Nick, and he never had enough money, and he would shoplift. He had got caught one or two times in the past, and now he got caught again for the third or fourth time. One of those times he was arrested, because he got caught stealing the copper from the buildings. In any case, when he got caught shoplifting, he eventually got sentenced to nine months in jail.

By now Nick had been approved for social security, had gotten a big check, bought some things, and was broke and shoplifting. I don't know how long he was in jail -- maybe it was only three or five months. Lance held his apartment for him, and took care of his checks. Lance visited him once, and he would write Lance once in a while.

Eventually Nick got out. He was all right for a while, but eventually he got into the same routine again. For courtesy's sake, Nick D moved out again. He got caught shoplifting, and screwed up his probation, so he went to jail again, I think. A couple of years later, Lance bumped into Nick again. He had been off drugs for a couple of years, and was getting his life together again. That was a couple of years ago -- Lance hasn't seen him since. But he's sure he's still doing good, cause Nick D always had that core of goodness and genuine concern for humanity, and he was a good guy.

Someday Lance is going to bump into Nick D again. Maybe in Lowell. Lance knows his last known residence was in Somerville. His mother lives in Lowell, but she can't find his address. Nick, if you're out there, Lance still has some of those recordings, baby, of you and him jamming, and some day, people are gonna hear some of the music of Nick D and Prophecy.

Mike of "Mike and the Spikes"

Lance's Guitar Guru

One quality that people would never say that Mike of "Mike and the Spikes" would ever exhibit, was what Lance Gargoyle would term, "vanity overload."

Mike was Lance Gargoyle's first and only guitar guru. They met at Solomon Mental Health on Varnum Ave in Lowell. Although Sidney Hipple is the primary candidate

for past mental health issues, Lance had a short stint at Solomon himself. Lance met Mike one day in the piano room. Mike was playing a little piano, and Lance started to talk to Mike about music. Lance had brought in his hollow body bass guitar. At that time Lance wasn't really a competent or polished musician. Oh yeah, he could sing pretty good, and he could always create some musical expressions on the bass -- but he didn't have any training.

Later on that day, after Mike and Lance met, Lance let Mike play his bass guitar. Mike could play it as a bass, or as a guitar, much better than Lance. But Mike being the humble guy that he was, didn't act all uppity. He was just playin', man. He was groovin' that groove. Lance thought to himself, "This guy is pretty talented, and it appears that he has at least a half a brain in his head." But overall he was a good person. They talked about jazz. Mike showed Lance the major chords on the piano. They became fast friends.

Mike was a little out there at times. But not so far that Lance didn't know where he was heading. Eventually Lance and Mike got out (of Solomon Mental Health). Not at the same time. But they got out. Lance would never go back, but Mike would make many more appearances over the years.

When Lance got out, he got on welfare, and lived in a one-room on Summer Street, the white building. If you ever go to Lowell, and go on Summer Street, you'll know what building it was. It's abandoned now. Years after Lance moved out, they put chicken wire on the downstairs window so people wouldn't break in.

Lance never lived on his own before, and he had never been good with money. Someone stole his food stamps, and he had no money. Sometimes Mike and Lance would sneak in the lunch line at Solomon. The cafeteria people

would assume that they were day patients. Sometimes a friend of theirs, a drummer named Roger Mono -- he had been in Solomon in the past too -- would go in the line with them.

None of them ever had money. They used to go into an outreach program of Solomon called the Renaissance Club. Patients and ex-patients used to hang around there when it was open. They had free donuts, and coffee was only a dime. Roger, Lance, and Mike were always bumming cigarettes. Roger always acted like the slickster -- he'd see a young woman walking down the street, need a cigarette, and say, "Hey babe, got a butt?" Although he rarely got any women, he had that self-confidence that Mike and Lance lacked, bumming from strangers.

After Lance smashed his hollow body bass against his radiator, Mike sold Lance a hollow bodied guitar that only had the four bass strings on it. That was all Lance played for a long time. If you're a real musician and you want to really play, you'll play anything that you got.

Mike showed Lance the simple blues, bar chords, and a couple other tricks that they could jam together. Eventually they recorded some songs together: "Vibrator Blues" with lines that said, "She's a girl who loves a vibrator / Even in the refrigerator / Every time I call or date her / She says I'll see you later."

Lance and Mike had a number of adventures. There weren't too many genuine people that Lance found to hang around with in Lowell. But Mike was a guy that Lance could trust.

One of their adventures involved hitch-hiking from Lowell to Salem, New Hampshire to donate blood for money. They walked a good portion of the way. Early on, when they first started out walking along the road, Mike would pick up cigarette butts off the ground to

smoke. Lance only smoked Marlboros. Sometimes Mike would find a Marlboro that wasn't smoked too much, and Lance, dying for a cigarette, would accept.

So they're walking along. Mike is always looking on the ground.. Sees something wrapped in tinfoil. He picks it up and opens it. It was pot. Lance enjoyed smoking pot. Mike was primarily a wine drinker, so he rarely smoked much pot. Walking along, Lance got a little bit of a buzz.

After three or four hours they finally got to Salem, New Hampshire, to the blood donor place. For some reason, they denied Mike -- maybe it was his extra, extra Bohemian appearance and attitude. Maybe his blood was fucked up. But they took Lance. Now the two of them had fifteen bucks and some pot. The first thing Lance did, was buy a couple packs of cigarettes.

They started walking and hitchhiking home to Lowell. They walked a long ways. Finally, walking on 495, the traffic had slowed down so much that they were walking faster than the cars were moving, and somebody let them in and gave them a lift.

You know that four string hollow body guitar that Lance bought from Mike for fifteen dollars? It took Lance four months to pay him off. Sometimes Lance would duck Mike because he would feel guilty about not having any money. Mike was the type of guy that wouldn't have cared anyways.

Eventually Mike got a one room apartment at 73 Fletcher Street. He had all types of stuff in there that he found on the street. Big stereo consoles that parts of it worked. Eventually Lance got a job as a pot washer at St. Joseph's Hospital, but they paid him every two weeks. In between pay periods, Lance would bum food stamps from Mike. Sometimes Lance would try to pay Mike back, but Mike

didn't care anyways.

After a couple of years of working at the hospital, and becoming the stock clerk for the kitchen, Lance drifted away from his old friends. He had developed friendships with people who worked at the hospital, and as time went on, he hooked up with other musicians from Lowell. Dan Santana -- Lance and him formed a group called "The Distortion Brothers." Lance played chords with a lot of distortion. Danny played lead with a lot of distortion. Another musician who came into Lance's scene when he lived at 231 Appleton Street was The Claw, Riff Graft. He always had a great guitar and great equipment, and loved playing lead and using the whammy bar. The friggin guy knew every conceivable scale there ever was to play on guitar.

Danny lived in the projects on Salem Street near the hospital. Danny's father was an older man. Danny would be wailing loudly on his Gibson, playing lead along with an album. His father would sit in the kitchen like it didn't even affect him.

Sometimes Mike would stop by and visit Lance, but he'd always want something, and look decrepit. Lance still had an ugly side back then, a selfish side. One day Mike stopped over to visit -- he'd gotten hit by a car, and his arm was in a sling, and he was bruised pretty badly. Mike just wanted someone to talk to. Lance knew Riff Graft was on his way over to play guitar. Lance had Mike sit in the closet the size of a phone booth, hidden away when Riff came over. Mike never thought it was any big deal, but later on, Lance would feel like "Maybe I shouldn't have fuckin' done that to Mike."

Lance felt he was entering into a new productive phase in his life. Mike's lifestyle seemed almost primitive to Lance. And remember, Mike was the

type of guy who would have given Lance the shirt off his own back. Maybe Mike reminded Lance of his desperate days in Lowell, that he wanted to forget. Because Mike had continued to go in and out of the hospital, Solomon, Lance felt that Mike would never leave that ugly cycle of institutions and nut juice.

After a couple of years, Mike stopped by and saw Lance. He had a job, a car, and a girl friend. He was washing and delivering automobiles at a dealership with his brother worked. He had been regularly taking medication, and his erratic moods had stabilized.

Couple years later, Mike was off the medication and back to his old self. Like Lance, Mike felt that the medication, or as they called it, the nut juice, severely altered a person's creativity, and the side effects always made you look like a goon. Your tongue would twist, your thoughts would still be racing a mile a minute, but your body didn't go no place, you felt lazy. That's why Mike never liked taking medication.

Eventually Lance surrendered his self-importance towards himself, and was more open to Mike's presence and situation. He even lived in Lance's building on Appleton Street for a while -- three different times, three different landlords. But Lance learned to live with the quirks of his good friend Mike, cause deep down inside, Mike was a humble, genuine guy who never ever had a bad word to say about anybody, even if they ripped him off. Okay, he might bitch a little bit, but he'd soon forget about it.

Mike always liked wine. He had got accepted for social security benefits, and would spend most of

the money after he got it on the first of the month. Mike would always be working on something. He'd have a couple of TVs in his room, with the chassis removed. The TVs would be somewhat working. Mike hung around with some real characters. Ditch Dooby for one.

Lance could usually put up with Mike for about six or seven months, before Lance would start to lose it. Mike would have no sense of time. Banging and building on the floor at three o'clock in the morning was not unusual for him. But they always remained friends. Mike would get on anybody's nerves, and he knew he got on Lance's nerves after a while.

Years later Mike would even live in the big building, the undisclosed building that Lance lives in now, that people can't know about because they'd bother him. Mike was regularly doing crack when he got his check, for a couple of days anyways. Lance would have Mike help out around the building that they lived in, and that Lance managed. Mike could make a couple extra bucks vacuuming the hallway, cleaning a refrigerator or a stove. Mike was meticulous and impeccable in his cleaning, for many years anyways.

Lance had adjusted to Mike and his ways. One month while he was waiting for his check to come in, he built a friggin acoustic guitar from scrap wood. He made a guitar neck, and went to Russo's Music and got some frets to put on it. It played and looked good, and Mike never had any fancy tools to work with either. But the first of the month came around, Mike got his money, got some crack, and smashed the guitar. Oh shit, I forgot -- Mike was always getting good guitars, or at last decent-playing guitars, and smashing them, or throwing them into the canal. The friggin guy had talent. His fingers were luck Gumbie when he played the guitar neck, the way they'd twist around to make

a chord. He was a character, I'll tell you that.

Eventually the building got sold and Mike, who as usual was behind on his rent, had to move. Lance wouldn't see him too often. Mike got arrested for urinating on the side of a building, and although it was a criminal matter, they put him in Tewksbury Hospital, where he remained for over a year. Lance went to visit Mike a couple of times, and it was a trip. This wasn't like the old carefree days at Solomon Mental Health. Most of the people in Tewksbury weren't going to ever come back. But Lance knew that Mike would. And eventually he did get released, under the condition that he go to a halfway house and take medication, or nut juice.

Lance always stops whenever he sees Mike riding his bike around town, or walking around town. They always have a good chat, and Lance always makes Mike feel like he's the most important person in the world, and certainly a member of the human race. Lance remembers when Mike lives in the building and would sometimes be talking to himself in his room. Lance would knock on his door and give him something to eat. Most of the time that's all he needed. Or someone to talk to. Lance found out for Mike, as for most people, the three basic requirements are -- to feel a part of society, if you want to call it that, or humanity, what it really is -- the three requirements are: something to eat, something to do, and someone to listen to you once in a while.

Lance learned a lot from Mike, not just a couple of guitar chords. He learned about genuineness and humbleness and understanding. You know when Mike was living in 73 Fletcher Street on welfare and food stamps, what he said to Lance one time? "The same people you see going up the ladder, is

the same people you see going down." Mike will always be remembered by Lance as Mike of "Mike and the Spikes." Although nowadays Mike is on the nut joice and unable to be as creative as he once was, but I'm sure in that halfway house, if they let him, he still working on something in his room. He talks about being trapped in that zombie environment with the other residents, but he's gonna make it. He got hit by a car and got a lawsuit, and got hit by a car other times and didn't get a lawsuit. But he always came back with that zest and gusto, and that enduring conviction that even if life sucks right now, chances are it's gonna get better when the check comes in at the first of the month.